



## DrumBeat: August 14, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 14, 2007 - 9:03am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### ['Cathedral Thinking'](#)

*Energy's Future: Until we solve climate change, says James E. Rogers, we need even the dirtiest fuel.*

**Everything you are saying here suggests that the only likely positive scenario has at least a 20-year time span. Yet you listen to someone like Al Gore and it sounds like we don't have 20 years.**

That's why we can't take anything out of the energy equation—coal, nuclear, gas, energy efficiency and renewables. I think we have had chronic underinvestment in energy efficiency. We really need to accelerate that. Mitigation of climate change is not going to happen fast enough. That is the reality. We need to think in a broad sense about both adaptation [to climate change] and mitigation [of it]. We really have to have what I would call cathedral thinking, where we are looking out and saying we need to address this problem over many decades, in the same way the cathedrals of Europe took many decades to build. It is going to take many decades of both mitigation and adaptation to get to the right place on this planet.

### [Iraqi deputy oil minister kidnapped](#)

Dozens of uniformed gunmen in 17 official vehicles stormed an Oil Ministry compound in Baghdad and abducted a deputy oil minister and three other officials, a ministry spokesman and police said.

Outside the capital, two suicide truck bombers separately struck a strategic bridge and a complex housing a small religious minority, killing at least 19 people, police said.

### [Wolfowitz 'tried to censor World Bank on climate change'](#)

The Bush administration has consistently thwarted efforts by the World Bank to include global warming in its calculations when considering whether to approve major investments in industry and infrastructure, according to documents made public through a watchdog yesterday.

On one occasion, the White House's pointman at the bank, the now disgraced Paul

Wolfowitz, personally intervened to remove the words "climate change" from the title of a bank progress report and ordered changes to the text of the report to shift the focus away from global warming.

### [Opec sees need for \\$2.4 trillion investment in crude capacity](#)

Oil producers need to pump \$2.4 trillion into projects to expand crude output capacity to meet future world demand and around \$680 billion will need to be invested by Opec members.

Nearly \$455 billion will need to be channeled into refining with Asia-Pacific region having the lion's share of capital expenditure, Opec says in its 2007 Oil Outlook.

### [Cellulosic ethanol: A fuel for the future?](#)

In the pine forests of rural Georgia, Devon Dartnell sees a path into the global fuel economy.

As the biomass program manager for the Georgia Forestry Commission, Dartnell is impatiently waiting for construction to begin next month of a plant that will convert forestry wastes into ethanol, a car fuel.

The facility is an important test to see whether lumber and agricultural by-products, rather than corn or sugar cane, are an economically viable "feedstock" for ethanol production. Behind the plant is Range Fuels, a start-up headed by a former Apple executive and financed by famed Silicon Valley venture capitalist Vinod Khosla.

### [While the Watchdog Sleeps](#)

The News media frequently brags on its role as the public's watchdog, looking out for the interests of the people, shining a light in dark places. But on what may be the most momentous, life-changing story to come along in decades, the media doesn't even notice.

### [EU sides with Greek Cypriots in oil spat](#)

The European Union has once again supported the Greek Cypriot administration in an oil spat between Nicosia and Ankara that stemmed from a tender for oil exploration in the eastern Mediterranean.

### [Iraq oil field work will increase capacity](#)

Increased rehabilitation in a key Iraqi oil field has been completed, setting the stage for more production and drilling of new wells.

"The rehabilitation of the Sayed Nour oil field, eastern Amara, will immensely contribute to sustaining the overall production capacity of al-Bazarkan oil complex, which already reaches 120,000 barrels per day," a spokesman told the Voices of Iraq news agency.

### [Energy-hungry Turkey drilling for more oil](#)

You may think that you cannot do without your car and therefore without the automotive industry, or that you can't live without your computer and consequently the information technology industry.

However, in reality there is just one industry which is more important than any other: the traditional energy industry. Without fuel from crude oil and natural gas, modern society and all its accoutrements would grind to a halt as cars would run out of oil and laptop batteries would never be recharged. Turkey is, sadly, energy poor; that is to say it lacks large fossil fuel reserves and has had to spend millions of YTL to generate power from its limited natural resources by building hydroelectric dams across most major rivers, solar panels on many houses and wind farms on the Aegean coast.

### [New faces but policies set to stay at OPEC](#)

Less than a month before OPEC meets to set oil output for peak winter demand, countries accounting for almost a third of production are either without an energy minister or getting used to a new one.

### [Getting a grip in Iran](#)

The Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has engineered the removal of Iran's oil and industry ministers in a move widely interpreted as signalling his push to impose his will and control over core areas of the economy in the lead-up to the parliamentary election scheduled for March 2008.

### [Mexico Congress to Cut Taxes on Pemex, Senator Says](#)

Mexican legislators agreed to reduce taxes on Petroleos Mexicanos, the state-owned oil company, by 60 billion pesos (\$5.45 billion) a year to free up funds for the company to spend on increasing crude production.

### [Gas Gives Oil Giants A Foot In Middle East's Door](#)

Since the 1970s, major oil companies have been shut out of oil production in much of the Middle East. Now, the doors to foreign investment are opening again, this time for natural gas.

### [Doubts over 'green' solar panels](#)

Solar panels fitted to homes may be harming the environment more than conventional sources of energy, according to a study by scientists.

More energy is used to build, run, and recycle solar panels compared with that for fossil fuel systems, according to researchers.

### [Biofuel Must for India, Say Experts](#)

Energy-starved India should invest in spurring large-scale cultivation of jatropha, a plant with seeds that can be mixed with fuel to form biodiesel, experts said Monday.

### Oh, the horror.... [Biofuel Boom Threatens Gummy Bears](#)

First it was tortillas in Mexico, then it was Frosted Flakes in America and recently German beer. Now the latest food to become the victim of prices pushed up by the massive shift of crops to biofuel are Germany's beloved gummy bears.

### [Carbon-Free and Nuclear-Free: A Roadmap for U.S. Energy Policy](#)

The other reason to actually go to 100 percent elimination is that climate change is shaping up to be more severe than estimated by models. We may have to remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere that has already been emitted to try to mitigate the severity. It makes no sense to remove CO<sub>2</sub> at great expense while emitting more. So I studied the technical feasibility of achieving an energy economy actually eliminating all fossil fuels. Some coal and natural gas infrastructure would be maintained as a contingency, but not used unless there is a major technical failure. Even then coal would only be used with carbon sequestration.

### [Clean energy gets gnarly, dude](#)

In the United States alone, wave technology could supply 6.5 percent of the nation's energy. No wonder, then, that startups are rushing to stake claims before someone else drops in on the best waves.

## [Why is America falling apart? Ask Ayn Rand](#)

What's causing all this? Could it be the reverse of the "Atlas Shrugged" effect? Might it be that greedy capitalists, comfy in their private jets and third, fourth and fifth vacation homes, aren't paying attention to the national infrastructure that they don't think they need to use?

## [Energy: Europe's Escape Routes from Moscow](#)

"You are seeing an attempt to enhance security by making any single supplier less important to the overall picture," said André Plourde, president of the International Association for Energy Economics. "If one supplier decides it is not interested in playing by the rules anymore, the impact would be smaller if you have alternatives [in sources or delivery routes] than it might otherwise be."

Not surprisingly, Russia has been resistant to EU efforts to diversify its energy supply and has not hidden efforts to undermine it: The union's most touted project, the Nabucco gas pipeline from Central Asia, received a significant blow in May, when Russian President Vladimir Putin traveled to Central Asia himself and closed deals with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to build a natural gas pipeline to tap the region of much of its gas and sell it back to Europe at a huge markup.

## [Iran plays the Central Asia card](#)

Iran and Turkmenistan have similar perspectives on the hitherto inconclusive marathon discussions on the division of the Caspian Sea. Iran is weary of any undue shift in Turkmenistan's foreign policy in Russia's favor at a delicate time when Iran-Russia relations have hit a new low as a result of the nuclear row and Russia's appeasement of Washington's demand to link the fate of the Russian-made power plant in Bushehr to the nuclear crisis. With President Vladimir Putin beginning to flex Russian military muscle on Georgia, and through a joint military exercise with China, Iran's concerns about a new Russian militarism are unmistakable.

## [Think Tank Slams Solutions to N.Korea's Energy Crisis](#)

The construction of light-water reactors or coal power plants or the direct provision of electricity will not be enough to help North Korea relieve its serious energy shortage, a state-run think tank says. The Korea Energy Economics Institute (KEEI) said such proposals betray a lack of understanding of the reality in North Korea and are inappropriate to solve the energy crisis across the border.

## [South Africa: Coal mine strike gathers momentum](#)

The coal mine strike over low salaries continued on Tuesday with no end in sight, trade union Solidarity said.

"The people are still striking. There is no indication from the Chamber of Mines or from the strikers that they want to end the strike," said spokesperson Reint Dykema.

### [Cash-Stuffed Suitcase Splits Venezuela and Argentina](#)

A scandal involving a Venezuelan businessman who tried to sneak nearly \$800,000 into this country has opened a sudden rift between Venezuela and Argentina just a week after the governments signed debt and energy deals.

### [The Philippines: Reyes explores nuclear power option](#)

The Department of Energy yesterday disclosed its plan to attract as much as \$5 billion in investments into the natural gas sector and pursue nuclear options in order to avert a power crisis which is seen to hit the country starting 2009.

### [The changing face of energy security](#)

China appears to believe that it can secure its energy imports by locking up oil contracts with pariah states like Sudan. However, while this short-sighted mercantilist approach creates foreign policy problems over issues like Darfur, it will not really protect China in a time of supply disruption.

### [Prices for many food staples are climbing by double-digit percentages](#)

Why are food prices rising?

It's partly because of corn prices, driven up by congressional mandates for ethanol production, which has reduced the amount of corn available for animal feed.

It's also because of tougher immigration enforcement, which has made farm laborers scarcer, and a late spring freeze, which damaged fruit and vegetable crops. And it's because of higher diesel fuel costs to run tractors and attractive foreign markets that take U.S. production.

### [Asia demand for W.Africa oil rebounds to 1.3 mln bpd](#)

Asian demand for West African crude oil rose sharply to 1.3 million barrels per day in September, rebounding from a multi-year low reached the previous month, traders said



on Monday.

The recent decline in ICE Brent crude futures, used as the benchmark in valuing West African grades, provided the financial incentive for Asian refiners to return to their usual purchasing levels.

### [The Impact of Peak Oil on Rural Communities](#) (PDF)

Over the next few years, as the price of oil increases and its availability declines dramatically on a global scale, there will be profound and far-reaching effects across society. This report collates information on what has been termed 'Peak Oil' both globally and for rural communities and centres on a discussion of the principal areas that will be affected by escalating oil prices.

### [Journey to the Past and/or the Future](#)

But the lesson of southern Italy is that what goes up may come down. The disintegration of the Roman Empire resulted in the end of urban civilization in the South. Populations mysteriously disappeared, although archaeologists and historians most suspect plague and environmental collapse as the root causes.

In any case, the Mediterranean economy -- based on trade -- fell apart. Instead of a commercial highway for grains, olive oil, wine and manufactured goods, the Mediterranean became an invasion route.

### [Climate Change And Permafrost Thaw Alter Greenhouse Gas Emissions In Northern Wetlands](#)

Permafrost - the perpetually frozen foundation of North America - isn't so permanent anymore, and scientists are scrambling to understand the pros and cons when terra firma goes soft. Permafrost serves like a platform underneath vast expanses of northern forests and wetlands that are rooted, literally, in melting permafrost in many northern ecosystems. But rising atmospheric temperatures are accelerating rates of permafrost thaw in northern regions, says MSU researcher Merritt Turetsky.

In the report, "The Disappearance of Relict Permafrost in Boreal North America: Effects on Peatland Carbon Storage and Fluxes," in this week's online edition of Global Change Biology, Turetsky and others explore whether melting permafrost can lead to a viscous feedback of carbon exchange that actually fuels future climate change.

### [OPEC ups estimate for oil demand growth despite world economic woes](#)

OPEC has slightly increased its estimate for world oil demand growth in 2007 despite

current economic turmoil, the powerful cartel said in a report Tuesday.

"World oil demand growth in 2007 is forecast at 1.3 million barrels per day (bpd), or 1.5 percent, slightly higher than the estimate for last month, reflecting additional oil needs for Japanese power plants," the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries said in its monthly report.

### [Oil, gas prices mixed on storm forecast](#)

Energy futures retreated from earlier highs on Monday as a revised forecast predicted a tropical storm will turn away from the Gulf of Mexico, and as refinery problems turned out not to be as bad as initially thought.

Tropical Depression Four, located in the central Atlantic Ocean, is strengthening and bearing down on the Caribbean Sea. But forecasters now believe the storm will swing north toward the Eastern Seaboard and away from the Gulf.

### [Denmark Attempts to Prove Claims to North Pole](#)

A Danish expedition in the Arctic will map the sea depths north of Greenland in an attempt to back up the country's claims to the much-disputed territory, the Danish government said today.

Denmark is looking into whether the Lomonossov Ridge, an underwater mountain chain between Greenland and Siberia, is an extension of Greenland.

### [Kunstler: Margin Call](#)

The seas were a mite choppy off Hedge Fund Island last week after all when the Federal Reserve started tossing life preservers of ready cash to the Big Fund Boyz bobbing and thrashing in the swells. Now, about that "money" — which is, in essence, a bunch of extended lines of credit at the Fed's artificially-low official interest rate — what actually happens to it? The simple answer is: it disappears into the same ocean of financial woe that the Boyz are drowning in.

### [A bridge not far enough](#)

Scotland - and the rest of the UK too - will need a solid public works strategy as the fairy gold of Brown's boom vanishes.

### [Foreign roads can be deadly for U.S. travelers](#)



Motor vehicle crashes — not crime or terrorism — are the No. 1 killer of healthy Americans in foreign countries. And the threat to travelers is poised to increase dramatically as worldwide economic growth gives more people access to motor vehicles.

Carolyn Baker: [In Praise Of "Sicko" But What Happens After The U.S. Healthcare System Dies?](#)

It behooves every American who takes collapse seriously and is consciously preparing for it, to learn healthcare skills. An individual can enroll in or audit almost any basic emergency lifesaving or first aid course at local community colleges or hospitals around the country. Health care professionals who are preparing for collapse can take their preparation to the next level by offering informal workshops on various aspects of healthcare for non-professionals. Moreover, a basic knowledge of herbal remedies and a generous inventory of them is essential, not only as access to traditional healthcare diminishes but as herbal remedies themselves become more difficult to acquire in terms of prices and the likelihood of government control or elimination of them.

[DiCaprio brightens up on gloomy green outlook](#)

Tired of global warming doom and gloom? Here's something new from Hollywood's king of green, Leonardo DiCaprio: there is hope for a brighter future.

Environmental activist DiCaprio's documentary "The 11th Hour" opens in theaters on Friday, and although the film starts with a bleak outlook on issues like global warming, much of the roughly 90-minute movie suggests ways to heal the environment with human, government and corporate action.

[Australian cities face water shortage](#)

Nearly every Australian city will have to find new water supplies over the next decade as climate change and population growth stretch the nation's already limited water resources, according to a study released Tuesday.

[Swedish PM targets US over climate change](#)

Sweden's prime minister called for more pressure on the United States and the major developing countries over climate change at the opening Monday of an international conference on water issues.

[Technology is key on global warming: Bush adviser](#)

The United States on Tuesday staked out its position ahead of a climate change summit

next month by endorsing new technologies, paid for by rapid economic growth, as the way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



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